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MAKING MONEY

BY

SELLING RUM.

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MAKING MONEY BY SELLING RUM.

[From Abbott's Religious Magazine.]

A MAN cannot make ten thousand dollars for himself, in any honest employment, without, at the same time, conferring a great advantage on the community. This principle, though not always considered, will, by a very little reflection, appear to be true.

All the useful and honest employments of life produce value. They produce it in various ways; sometimes by bringing a useful article from the ground; sometimes by changing the form of a raw material to a more useful, or, in other words, a more valuable one, in a manufactory; and sometimes, again, by adding to its value, by change of place, in commerce. In these, and in various other ways, the individual creates value. Now a portion only of this value comes to him; the other portion goes to others, whom he supplies, as an inducement for them to deal with him. So that, for all the value he produces for himself, he must, on an average, produce a large amount for others.

For example, a carpenter builds a store in a country village, and receives for it a thousand dollars; and of this we will suppose, that two hundred and fifty dollars is his clear gain. Now the transaction is not a profitable one to him alone. The trader, who contracts with him, finds the contract of pecuniary advantage to himself, or he would not make it. By putting a portion of his property,—the thousand dollars,—into the form of a store, he has added to its value to him, or he would not have incurred the risk and responsibility of doing it. And probably it was as much for his advantage to employ the carpenter, as it was for the carpenter to be employed.

We say probably as much, because sometimes, in transactions of this nature, the advantage may lie mainly on one side; but, generally, in bargains among men, the ad-

vantage will be mutual and equal, and the man who makes ten dollars for himself, in any honest and useful calling, enables the man he deals with to make ten dollars too.

There is another view we may take of making money in fair and honorable ways. Suppose a physician goes to reside in a town, and, in the course of thirty years, he lays by, in the honest practice of his profession, ten thousand dollars. This money may, strictly speaking, be considered a certificate from the community, of the amount of good he has done to others during his residence there. In fact, we may imagine that upon one coin is inscribed, "This certifies that the bearer saved a child from death in a fever;" on another, "This piece of money is a token of the relief and comfort which medical skill procured for an aged man in his last days," &c. &c. For it is very evident that if the physician understood his profession, and was faithful in the practice of it, for every fee he must have rendered an equivalent of useful service to a family, either in saving life, or assuaging and mitigating suffering. The greater the amount, then, of property he has accumulated, by fair and honorable means, the greater is the evidence of the good he has done.

There is a very common but most groundless impression, that, when a man makes his fortune among a people, he gets the money *out of them*, as the phrase is; whereas, it is, as we have shown, in all fair and honest business, just the reverse; he does, perhaps, quite as much good to the community as he does to himself. The wholesale dealer, who clears ten thousand dollars a year by importation, enables a hundred retailers, to clear, in all, probably, an equal sum, by retailing his cargoes; and the retailers, in turn, by exchanging the foreign commodity for the farmer's products, enable the thousand farmers to realize an equal advantage, though it may come to them not in cash, but in the means of comfort and enjoyment. The notion does, nevertheless, extensively prevail, that when any man makes money, somebody must lose it—though nothing can be more idle. The amount of value in the community is rapidly increasing. If business is conducted upon proper principles, and in proper modes, all grow rich together, and a man, by making money himself, makes money also for his neighbors.

These remarks, however, will apply only to the fair and honorable species of business,—to the production and exchange of articles which really contribute to the enjoyment or comforts of life, and to services which are really useful in diminishing the sufferings or adding to the happiness of mankind. We do not mean here exclusively the necessaries of life, but we include its luxuries, so far as they really add to human enjoyment.

There are, however, kinds of business, in which a man does make his money out of the community. He *takes away* from others just as much as he makes himself. For instance, if he manufactures and sells a worthless article, he takes the money of his purchasers, and they receive no equivalent. The merchant who imports a cargo of real nutmegs, does, very probably, as great a service to any family who ultimately buys one, as he himself derives from the profits on that one; but the pedler (to make use of a notorious but imaginary case), who sells the wooden article, *takes away* from his customers just as much as he receives. The value of the cargo of real nutmegs is divided into three portions. One portion comes to the importer in the shape of his profits. Another portion goes to the retailers, as theirs; and a third to the consumers, in the superior utility to them, which the article possesses over that which they exchange for it. But the pedler above alluded to, simply steals from his customers, and gives them something to keep them quiet till he is away.

A manufacturer of counterfeit money, in the same manner, steals from the community; and his counterfeit bill is only a quietus, to satisfy his customer till he makes his escape. If he gives a counterfeit bill in exchange for a certain commodity, it is plain that he actually steals that commodity. *He* really makes money *out of* the community.

The counterfeit dealer has, however, this thing in his favor, which some people have not, viz., that what he leaves in the hands of his customers, as the fictitious representative of what he takes away from them, does no hurt. They carry the counterfeit bill a few days in their pockets, until they find its worthlessness, and then they simply lay it aside. It does not bite them, nor poison them. It does not destroy their health, and shorten their days: it does not beggar their children nor break their wives' hearts, nor ruin their souls.

A man who takes his neighbor's property, and gives him a counterfeit bill instead, is a thief; but the man who, in exchange for his neighbor's property, gives him a lottery ticket, is not *all* thief; he is only part thief; but then he is part murderer. First, he is only part thief, because the lottery ticket has *some* value. Its value is its fair chance of winning a prize, calculated on well known principles, a very small chance to be sure, in most lotteries; but still it is something; to whatever amount the price paid for the ticket exceeds this small chance, just to that amount does the dealer take away his neighbor's property without an equivalent. But the murderous part of the transaction is the worst; for it is the indirect tendency of lottery gambling to lead the miserable victim into dejection, and poverty, and misery, and ultimately to suicide. Still, however, he who gives his neighbor lottery tickets in exchange for his property, is not fully a murderer. It is only the *indirect* tendency of the lottery to kill its victims.

In regard, however, to the man who takes his neighbor's property, and in exchange for it gives him *rum*, we fear we cannot go by halves, in speaking of either aspect of the transaction. In the first place, he receives his neighbor's money wholly without an equivalent. The rum has no value to him whatever. It is worthless, and wholly worthless, so that the seller takes the money of another, without making any return. This is dishonest—not legally so, we admit, but really so, in the eye of God.

But this is not the worst of it. The article which is put into the miserable victim's hand, to induce him to give up his money, is not merely worthless—it is destructive. Its direct, well known, universal, and inevitable tendency, is to kill;—to kill soul and body. It is not right, however, to say that the rum-seller is a murderer, after all; for murder is not his object. All he wants, is his customer's three cents! He does not wish to kill him. He only gives him what kills him, because that is the only way to get his three cents. He does not wish to destroy the man, for the very sake of destroying him. He does not desire, on its own account, to ruin his character, and take away his property, and break his wife's heart, and beggar and starve his children. No; his object is only to get the man's money; and he does these things, because that seems to him the short-

est way to secure his three cents. It is not, therefore, strictly correct to say, that he is a murderer.

Still, all the money he makes, is worse than taken dishonestly. *It is the price of blood!* Every dollar he receives, instead of being a certificate of the amount of good he has done, is a certificate of the misery and ruin he has spread around him. His coin should be inscribed, "This certifies that the bearer has made a man beat his wife." "This half dollar is a memorial of four nights of wretchedness, which were given to a whole family in exchange for it." "This bag of money certifies, that the possessor has sent two of the neighbors to the jail, and his wife and children to the poor-house." What money for a man to hold in his coffers! IT IS THE PRICE OF BLOOD!

Observe now the difference between the different modes of making money. An honest carpenter, who spends ten years in a village, and carries away two thousand dollars of his earnings, actually leaves the village two thousand dollars richer than it would have been without him. You will see the barns, and houses, and stores, which he has erected, and which remain permanent memorials of his useful labors. The counterfeiter, who should carry away two thousand dollars of good money in exchange for his worthless bills, does no harm, but simply to carry off the money. The village is just two thousand dollars poorer, and no more. He benefits himself at least *as much as he injures his neighbor*. But the man who has made his two thousand dollars by selling *rum*,—why, for every dollar he gets himself, he does his customer fifty dollars worth of injury Fifty dollars! Shall I estimate the destruction of soul and body, of wife and children, of character and life, in dollars? Oh, he does an injury which cannot be estimated. The marks he leaves behind him are dilapidated dwellings, miserable children, widowed and broken-hearted mothers, and an impoverished neighborhood.

We had written exactly to this place, and had our papers actually before us on the table, when an event occurred—it is this moment over,—which we must stop to describe. It is a cold November evening, and we are writing in a dwelling, situated in one of the principal *Places* in the city of New York, opening upon Broadway. While sitting

thus, our attention is arrested by a disturbance in the street; —a cry of "*Watch!*" "*Watch!*" "*Watch!*" It draws nearer and nearer, and at length a confused sound of angry voices seems to arise from the side-walk below, very near the house. We open the window, and look down to the pavement below.

The light of the city lamps reveals a small crowd of men and boys, pressing around the steps of the door; confused voices are heard, among which, however, are distinguished the tones of a female, who seems to have fled for refuge to a corner, made by the projecting steps; and the vociferations of an intoxicated and angry man, who with the most awful oaths and imprecations, calls her to come out. He swears he will cut her down. She is his wife. He can prove it. She is his legal wife, and she has been abusing him, and tearing his clothes, and he will not submit to it. He'll die on the very spot, before he will leave it, till she comes out, and he cuts her down. These are his words, with the omission of the most awful oaths and blasphemies which tongue can utter.

The confusion and uproar increase, until the crowd break up, and move away, with loud vociferations, from various voices; threats from the drunken husband; appeals of the terrified wife; and, "to the watch house," "to the watch house," from the officers of police. We shut the window, and returned to our fire, with a heart ready to sink at the guilt and miseries of man.

And now, as we finish the description of this illustration of our subject, the wretched husband and wife have, probably, just about reached their place of confinement for the night; and somewhere in this city, is the man, who, in counting up his gains for the day, finds a few cents, which he has received from this husband, and perhaps, father. For the sake of those few cents, he has made a night of misery, at least for two. He has sent a poison into a family, which has destroyed its peace, and driven the wretched wife away from her home, out into the streets, in the cold bleak wind of a November night, to seek, in some corner, a refuge from the murderous threats of her intoxicated husband! Oh, how can a human being be found, cruel and merciless enough, to be willing to make money by selling rum?

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